

Pentecost

Suddenly we are taken back to Easter night: on the evening of the first day of the week... frightened Disciples sitting behind closed doors. The fact that Jesus appears in their midst does not seem to frighten them any longer. An appearance, a delusion that is new, but yet quite different - yet somehow well-known and familiar. Jesus had greeted them with Shalom, peace. But what does peace mean if you are sitting behind closed doors and you are scared and frightened? Should you have new hope, to make a new start, to do away with fear, to open the doors and windows, to lose all shame of being a loser – to show your face, to fly the flag, to put the cards on the table? Shalom – peace – a delusion.

Jesus shows them his hands and his side, a reminder of suffering and death, of blood and nails. But strangely enough it is said that the Disciples were overjoyed. It was not the unknown. It was the familiar, the wounds. The wounds are the distinctive mark, the certificate of authenticity. You do not brag with wounds. But wounds show what you are ready to cope with. The Disciples were overjoyed to see the Lord. And now they know what Shalom wants to tell them: Peace.

This everyday greeting turns into a mission for them: „As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you“ and then he breathed on them. „He breathed on them“ literally means he blew his Spirit into them, his Holy Spirit. On the cross Jesus exhaled his own Life, his Spirit. What does this „exhaling“ mean? It means he exhaled his Spirit *into* the disciples, *into* the world. We all breath this „air“, his Holy Spirit. We all live from his „breath of life“, his Spirit. And the disciples realize what the term Shalom is supposed to mean for them: they are to live from Jesus' Life, they should be filled with his Spirit. They need to impart this Life, to breath out this Spirit into the world.

And Jesus speaks about sin; sin does not belong into this world. Therefore, he tells the Disciples to do away with sin in the world. We simply

cannot remain indifferent to Jesus' Easter message, his lasting spirit of Pentecost. We cannot remain indifferent to what sin means; and certainly not to the meaning of forgiveness. The sequence of the Feast of Pentecost tells us about the significance of sin.

Defilement: Environmental pollution and even more pollution of the inner world. *Drought*: not only a consequence of climate change; drought means for many people life in agony in mortal combat. This does not come about naturally. It is the consequence of injustice, exploitation if other people are choking. Life in agony is a culture of drying out because water becomes more and more shallow: the waters of humanity, the relationships with others, the responsibility for each other. Our big words have turned small – they wander around like ghosts in our speeches. They never become reality. The language, the communication has dried up; bridges have turned into ditches, even abysses. *Agonizing disease* means sin; everything that sickens, that offends, what hinders the existence of others, what keeps them small, what tears them down. How many people have turned ill from offenses? How many people's dignity or rights have been wounded?

The force of the law is sin, if it has turned blind for a concrete situation, concrete life. *Immobility* is sin. Stuck in the dead ends of dogma, tradition, and stubbornness. *Losing one's way* is sin, not only destiny. Losing one's way means to lose sight of the goal; having lost God as a goal means that something different has become the goal.

If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven: victims will forgive their offenders. How many times have we been praying this text in the Lord's Prayer: And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. What spirit provokes a person to do so?

Today, we acknowledge that we can do so. Therefore, we beg: "Send forth Your Spirit and all shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth."

Hadrian W. Koch OFM

Southeast Asia

Malaysia: CCFMC-Training Program in Kota-Kinabalu

An international training program for coordinators and animators of the CCFMC took place in Malaysia in early 2017. The program covered the basic principles of the Course and gave an introduction into its spiritual foundation. Sr. Dorothy sent us an invaluable contribution about this major event. It was held from 18 to 29 January 2017 and was attended by about 70 participants from nine – countries of Southeast Asia - including members of religious education programs from various Franciscan groups as well as coordinators of Christian programs at schools headed by Franciscans. The full wording can be downloaded at ([Report Dorothy](#))



The main aim of this seminar's program was that the *current and prospective CCFMC-Coordinators and Animators experience personal intimacy with Jesus*, Sr. Dorothy writes. This program invites all "to turn information into transformation ... use traditional texts and experiences to lead people into new places with God, with life and with themselves." This is the reason why the 25 Lesson Units had been left behind and the basic sources had been put to use instead: the Scriptures, the Sources for the lives of Francis and Clare as well as the Papal Encyclicals.

Two traditional texts had been given to the participants for reflection and contemplation: *St. Francis' Prayer before the Crucifix* and *The Gospel of St. John, Chapter 1*. These texts served as the basis for presentation of the following topics at the Conference:

1. **Birth of a Movement – the Franciscan Family.** It illustrates the development of the Rule and Life of the Order of St. Clare, the Order of the Franciscans Secular, the Third Order Regular as well as the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. Since there are no documents available covering the history of the Order of the Friars Minor after 1517, Fr. Benedikt Mertens, OFM presented a paper entitled *vision in A Challenging World: Franciscan Identity Rooted in Historical Memory and Pulsating the Creative Prophecy*. The paper showed how time-tested Franciscan values have and are repeatedly manifested in a time-worthy fashion throughout history.
2. **Christian/Franciscan Core Values.** Fr. Cristino Pine OFM, a biblical scholar, drew the participant's attention to rather infrequently read Scriptures of the Bible. He traced the origin of the Franciscan mission charism to much earlier accounts in the Old Testament than mentioned in Lesson Unit No. 5. He also emphasized that the heart of the Franciscan vocation lies in the Trinitarian Mystery.
3. **Call for New Evangelization.** Fr. Baltazar Obico OFM, lectured about the conversion of St. Francis and his early companions within the context of the struggle for power between the nobility and the merchant class in times of fast changing values. He invited the community to even today also join their teachers – hence the poor, the elderly, the sick, the migrants, the prisoners, and the homeless, and especially the women and children suffering from abuse. He pointed out that the

world is our cloister. He emphasized the special importance of taking care of Mother Earth and to ensure that destruction will not continue any further. He underlined the connection between the pollution of our hearts, which is the starting point of the destruction of the environment.

4. **Call to Action.** The CCFMC is both a pedagogical tool as well as an organizational structure. Both elements contributed to the active Franciscan involvement, i.e. with the study of the Franciscan mission charism, which has been handed down from generation to generation of Franciscans in the past 800 years. On the other hand, it is also the interaction of experts and neophytes in Franciscan studies on international, inter-Franciscan and intercultural level. There are no teachers and students, per se; all are called to share their experiences and knowledge and thus jointly proclaim God's Good News through words and life style.

First echo of the Seminar in Kota Kinabalu



The main actors of the CCFMC-programs in Southeast Asia: Sr. Dorothy und Joy Famini Fabric.

The Franciscan Family in the Philippines is one of the first that will translate the program of the seminar of Kota Kinabalu into practical action. The Franciscan Family has invited to a three-part training program: the first phase will be held in Baguio City from 23 to 26 June 2017. The main topic of this event will be the presentation of the *Rule and Life of each Order in the Franciscan Family*. The second phase, which will take place in General Santos City from 25 to 28 August 2017, will highlight *Christian / Franciscan core values* through intensive study of the Lesson Units. The program will be enriched with experiences and insights from the seminar in Kota Kinabalu. The third phase will be conducted from 30 November to 03 December 2017. ([read more](#))

Goals of the CCFMC in Southeast Asia / Oceania

The coordinators and animators of the CCFMC, who participated in the seminar in Kota Kinabalu, concretized their goals in a joint statement:

- We contemplate on situations that reflect God's presence in our world today and pinpoint to causes and consequences of events that give rise to situations inimical to the Gospel and Franciscan values.
- We read the Signs of the Times from the perspective of the Scriptures, Church Teachings, particularly the Encyclicals of Pope Francis, and Franciscan Sources.
- We elicit the cooperation and sharing of human and material resources, of members of the Franciscan Family and of all people of good will for effective response to the needs of our times.
- We regularly meet to study, reflect and contemplate Scriptures and Sources for the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare.
- We witness through concrete and practical ways on how "to teach what we learn and to give what we receive – not tomorrow, but now" (Pope Francis).

Africa

Kenya

The CCFMC and the Franciscan Family are jointly growing

In his report from the end of March Fr. Hermann Borg draws a very positive conclusion regarding the joint efforts of the CCFMC (Comprehensive Course on Franciscan Mission Charism) and the Franciscan Congregations in Kenya. Among other things he says:



Since over 20 years the Superiors of over 30 Franciscan Congregations of Kenya meet twice a year for their General Assembly. It all started due to the implementation of the CCFMC. The General Assembly has a well-structured program including written reports on the various Franciscan Programs offered to the Sisters and Brothers.

Our feeling of togetherness is our common good; the reports document the dynamics and the creativity of our various entities. Each congregation is independent, it plans and works independently. Yet, joint gatherings, recollections, retreats and festivities are the source of strengthening our Franciscan identity... We are united. We are searching for unity and strengthening our

unity.

The various noviciates in the area of Nairobi follow common programs of joint meetings in formation with about 60 novices. With the start of the CCFMC 20 years ago, all Franciscan entities were assured that the right and true Franciscan charism is brought forward, reflected and implemented.

The Superiors are aware of all ongoing processes, the implementation and the realization of the Franciscan charism in the lives of the Franciscan Sisters and Brothers in Kenya. “

Latin America

Uruguay: Fray Jerónimo Bórmida OFMCap



In mid-February, we received the sad news about the passing away of Fray Jerónimo Bórmida. We have lost one of the pioneers and supporters of the CCFMC in Cono Sur (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay). From the beginning, Fray Jerónimo was involved with passion and enthusiasm – not only in his province but far beyond that. Initially, since the beginnings of the CCFMC till the end of the 1990's, he was involved for the promotion of the CCFMC in Argentina and Uruguay, later on also in his various positions worldwide.

He studied theology in Fribourg, Switzerland and earned his Doctorate in Rome, Italy. Together with other professors, he founded the Theological Faculty in Uruguay. He served his provinces and the Order as provincial, prefect, Definitor General as well as in the educational sector and, thus, he was able to promote the CCFMC on an international level.

At the beginning of the digitalized era, he identified what opportunity this would imply for the CCFMC. He began with the digitalization of the Lesson Units and provided them for international circles and interested persons on the internet. But not only that! He continued to support his CCFMC students via this new medium of communication.

The staff of the CCFMC Centre was able to meet him in person during an animation trip through Latin America. There was pure enthusiasm for this inter-Franciscan spirituality programme. This reaction motivated us to continue untiringly with our service in the global promotion of the Course. Thank you so much dear Fray Jerónimo!

Andreas Müller OFM

Guideline for the preparation of articles for the newsletters

Our newsletter is not only a source of information or meant to strengthen solidarity – it is also especially for mutual inspiration. We all live in different cultures and under different circumstances. However, we share the joint effort to shape the world out of the Franciscan spirit by using the course contents of the CCFMC. It is always interesting to read about the work of different countries and cultures and their achievements as well as the challenges they are facing. The respective starting points and the resulting courses of action can often not be directly transferred to other cultures. Still, we want to learn from one another.

In order to do so and continue to do so, we would like to ask you to observe the following details when preparing articles for the news.

1. Provide information about the initial situation, e.g.:

- What is the social situation and political situation?
- What is the situation of the Church in the country/in the region?
- Is the work at grass-root level being supported or rather hampered? Etc.

2. What was the concept of the activity/the meeting/the project/the intervention?

- Motivation
- Content
- Objective

3. How did the participants experience the activity/the meeting/the project/the intervention?

- What was important to them?
- What was new to them?
- What impressed or inspired them most?

4. What are the subsequent steps?

- What are the priorities?
- What success is visible?
- What obstacles have to be overcome?
- What are the key questions? Etc.

The above list of questions is to serve as a **suggestion** and **guideline** for the preparation of short articles for the newsletter. Details are rather of interest for the protocols and reports for the respective participants. Please choose those questions that will assist you most to write an article. And please remember that you are writing the article for your Brothers and Sisters around the world. Ask yourself what could be interesting, helpful and inspiring for them.

Thank you for all your work and for sharing it with us in your written contributions!



World Environment Day Celebrations in the Wild

[World Environment Day Celebrations in the Wild.pdf](#)

Fr .Hermann Borg Plants a tree during 2017 WED celebrations